

AGR Newsletter

May 2000

This newsletter contains information compiled by the AGR Office which is of general interest to all Active Guard Reserve (AGR) soldiers. The information contained herein is derived from such sources as the National Guard Bureau (NGB), Military Personnel Office (MILPO), and Human Resources Office (HRO) as it pertains to full-time National Guard employment. This is our first attempt at preparing and distributing a newsletter in years. We hope that you will find this medium of communication interesting, informative and relevant to full-time employment in the Arizona Army National Guard.

WELCOME TO HRO

As many of you may know by now, the AGR Office has moved to the Human Resources Building #5555. You may have noticed that a few changes to our staff have occurred as well. LTC Richard Palmatier is assigned as the new Army AGR Manager. We also welcome Msgt Barbara Klinger from the Air National Guard. Msgt Klinger is the Air National Guard AGR Manager. Please note the current office phone listing below.

Special Note: We are planning on having a Open House and AGR Appreciation Day on the schedule sometime in May. Stay tuned for more information. Remember without you, we don't have a job.

AGR OFFICE PHONE LISTING

Our new office symbol is AZAA-HR-A

| Rank | Name | Title | Ext |
|------|--------------------|----------------|------|
| SGT | Angelo, Lisa | Benefits Coord | 2453 |
| SFC | Carlson, Judy K. | AGR Staffing | 2948 |
| Msgt | Klinger, Barbara | Air AGR Mgr | 2430 |
| LTC | Palmatier, Richard | AGR Mgr | 2485 |

POLICY AND PROCEDURE UPDATE

Military Personnel Office:

(1) All AGR personnel information must be sent on the newly implemented Standard Installation Division Personnel System (SIDPERS) Transmittal Letter (T/L). Please attach two copies of each document submitted and send it to the AGR Office. Item number 3 (AGR T/L Number) should be left blank and it will be filled out in this office and forwarded to SIDPERS.

Finance

(1) Dislocation Allowance (DLA) computation has been changed from the previous formula of 2 ½ months BAH to a new computation based on rank and with or without dependants.

(2) Cashing in leave can be requested upon new tour continuation orders, separation or retirement. For continuation orders be sure that the DA Form 4187 requesting

to sell leave arrives in this office at the same time as the DA Form 4836. In other words, do not wait until after your orders are cut. The request for leave paid **must** be input at the same time or it will not happen. It is more important to get a paycheck than wait and find out DFAS put a suspend on your account.

(3) Every attempt is made so that tour continuation orders coincide with your Guard ETS. Notices are sent out approximately 90 days prior to your end of tour date and every attempt is made so new continuation orders are cut. **DO NOT WAIT TILL THE LAST MINUTE!** Remember it is ultimately the soldiers responsibility, its your career.

(4) All grade change orders must be sent directly to the Military Pay (MILPAY) Section even if they are done at state level. This cuts off the additional time it may take to get the orders input into the Defense Accounting System (DFAS). Remember, SIDPERS may drive pay but not on the AGR side. The AGR pay data does not transfer over from the SIDPERS database and must be input directly into MILPAY. The grade change may be showing up on all reports you receive but MILPAY still shows the old data. This also includes dependant information, tax, and change of address.

(5) The same problem is happening on the officer promotion side. Upon receiving federal recognition orders on AGR officers a copy must be forwarded to MILPAY. Officer Personnel Management (OPM) forwards to SIDPERS but not to MILPAY.

PLEASE NOTE: A change is in the works on promotions being sent to MILPAY directly from the AGR section on both officers and enlisted. Give us your feedback.

LEAVE AND EARNING STATEMENT (LES)

Yes, we know your tired of getting your LESs after the fact, but we have no control (just yet anyway) of having your LES before the EOM deposit.

This office receives all 330 LESs in alpha order and sorts them by unit and distributes within 24 hours. As a reminder, this section will no longer be forwarding Mid Month LESs. We have found it to be a waste of resources (paper and time). If you or you have a soldier who needs to know what their midmonth pay is going to be, get the soldiers name and SSN and email Milpay after the 10th of the month in question. **DO NOT call MILPAY directly.** Please go through your PAC and have them email MILPAY. Any questions may be directed to this office. Thank you for your cooperation.

TOP WEBSITES TO VISIT

1. Military Information

<http://www.militaryinfo.com>

2. Per Diem and Travel Rates

<http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem>

3. Current Job Openings/Info

<http://www.azng.com>

4. Retirement Information

<http://huachuca-www.army.mil/usag/mpd/tp/tpoint.htm>

5. TRICARE Information

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil>

<http://www.human-military.com>

6. United Concordia network providers and pharmacies

<http://www.ucci.com>

7. Armed Forces News

<http://www.armedforcesnews.com>

8. AAFES

<http://www.aafes.com>

9. 2000 Pay Tables

<http://www.dfas.mil>

10. Current Info on REDUX

http://pay2000.dtic.mil/bottom_redux.html

11. Military Travel Guide

<http://militarytravelguide.com>

USEFUL NUMBERS

1. TRICARE Central Region Information 1-888-874-9378

2. TRICARE Line for Care 1-888-887-4111. Provides general health and wellness advice and is available 24 hrs, 7 days a week.

3. United Concordia Customer Service 1-800-866-8499

4. Luke AFB medical appointments/sick call 623-856-CARE (2273)

5. Luke AFB dental appointments 623-856-7533

6. DM AFB Medical appointments/sick call 520-228-2699

7. DM AFB Dental appointments 520-228-2651

ARMY AGR MEDICAL and TRICARE NEWS

DEERS/RAPIDS INFO

Make sure that all soldiers check their family members DEERS information. Due to computer updates some dependants are changed to ineligible. Contact the nearest DEERS/RAPIDS site to correct or verify ALL your information.

TRICARE PROVIDERS

Use TRICARE participating or network providers whenever possible and always let your physician know your family is covered by TRICARE before making an appointment.

If you or a family member has a emergency, seek care at the nearest facility or call 911. Within 24 hours call TRICARE at 1-888-874-9378.

CIVILIAN FRAMES FOR ARMY GLASSES

The Army is implementing a new program so active-duty soldiers will no longer have to pay out of pocket for a pair of civilian glasses. The Army "Frame of Choice" or FOC program will let soldiers choose a civilian-style frame for one of their two pairs of military-issue glasses. Already in operation in Europe, the program is being phased in across the rest of the Army in the coming months. Those eligible are active-duty personnel, reserve components on active duty (other than training) and National Guard members on a "call" longer than 30 days (not including training). Military retirees are not eligible for the

FOC program. This program is being implemented Army-wide after a successful response from 1st Armored Division personnel during the pilot effort this past summer. Although the choice of a civilian frame will not eliminate standard-issue frames, it will give soldiers another incentive to wear their glasses --one pair for daily wear and another for the field. The FOC frames are unisex, come in various wire-rim styles and in different colors such as gold, pewter, black, plum and rose. As for the FOC lenses, the general policy is no tinting or special coatings. Patients can normally expect to get their glasses within one week after getting fitted at their local clinic. This includes bifocals and trifocals. Special-order prescriptions may take longer. Green said soldiers are entitled to one pair of FOC glasses per year. It is estimated that the FOC program will cost about \$1.2 million a year. The FOC frames, on average, cost \$10 more per pair than the standard-issue frames.

ID CARDS

Family member's dependent military ID card will expire every four years, or at the end of your active duty tour, whichever comes first. The card will not automatically renew when you, the sponsor, get a new active duty ID card. Also, if your card does expire, your TRICARE claims may be paid retroactively, but the TRICARE Family Member Dental Plan will not pay claims for the time their card was expired.

This office has noticed that when a soldier is within 30 days of their tour ending date, and has the dental plan, they may be dropped from the dental program and need to be re-input. Please have the soldiers fill out a new DD 2494 (Dental Plan Enrollment Form) and it can be resubmitted with their tour continuation orders.

NICE TO KNOW TRICARE INFO

S=TRICARE Standard

P=TRICARE Prime and Prime Remote

E=TRICARE Extra

T=Applies to all TRICARE Programs

(S) TRICARE does not cover ultrasounds for pregnancy, unless there is a medical reason. The pregnancy must be a high-risk pregnancy. Even if your doctor orders one, it will not be paid for unless it is billed as required for medical reasons. Your doctor should call for authorization first.

(P) If you enroll in TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Prime Remote, you are enrolled until you fill out a form to disenroll. That goes for family members and active duty members.

(P) Once you enroll with a PCM you are required to use that PCM or face Point of Service (POS) charges. POS charges are \$600.00 deductible and 50% co-pay.

(S) Providers who agree to participate in TRICARE (TRICARE payments go directly to them), also agree to provide medical care within the TRICARE guidelines. If you have doubts about whether TRICARE will pay for a service, either ask your provider to call TRICARE and get an "authorization number" or you can call yourself for authorization.

(S) Whenever dealing with a participating provider, only pay what TRICARE tells you to pay on your Explanation of Benefits (EOB).

HRO INPUT

What attracts the best employees to a company, and what makes them stay?

These are two of the oldest questions in the human resources world, and maybe the most important.

Here are some of the 12 key elements from an employee's perspective, with clear implications for what it's going to take to attract and keep valuable talent.

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need?
3. Do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. In the last week, have I been recognized for good work?
5. Does my supervisor seem to care about me?
6. Does anyone at work encourage my development?
7. Do my opinions seem to count?
8. Does my company's mission make my work seem important?
9. Are my co-workers committed to quality work?
10. Do I have a best friend at work?
11. In the last six months, have I talked with someone about my progress?
12. At work, have I had opportunities to learn and grow?

AGR HANDBOOK

There is a lot of valuable information in the AGR Handbook, and it is available by email or distribution to anyone who requests a copy. Just call or email this office.